

## IAAP-USA Holds *Challenges Amid Success in South Korea* Webinar

Michael Jenkins  
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USA -- **Dr. Staffan Berg**, coordinator, IAPP-USA, welcomed the participants and viewers to the second webinar hosted by the International Association of Academicians for Peace (IAAP) on May 31, 2022 dealing with the theme, "Challenges Amid Success in South Korea."

South Korea leads Asia in prosperity, the culture of youth, financial success and upward mobility. Paradoxically, despair among the youth, as with most industrialized nations, is rising. Its suicide rate tops all in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and is the leading cause of death among Korea's 10- to 24-year-olds. Korea hosts more abortions than any other nation on earth. It also has the lowest birthrate in the world as the marriage rate among the young and successful continues to decline.



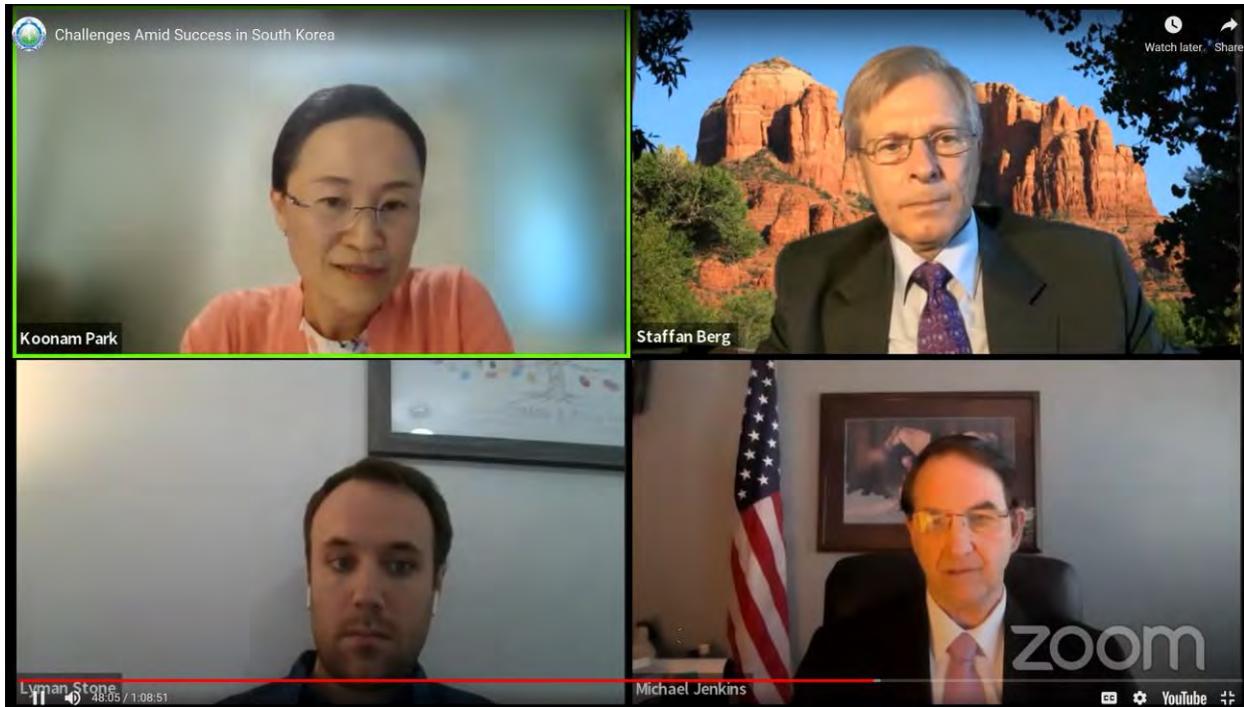
Panelist **Lyman Stone**, director of research at the consulting firm Demographic Intelligence, stressed that contrary to popular bias, there is no connection between population and pollution. Stone said, "I cannot emphasize it enough. It is just scientific malpractice. It is made up. When you actually look under the surface at the math, it is all made up. It is farcical."

Stone rhetorically asked the other panelists, "Did your income go up by having one more child?" No. It went down. One parent stayed home or worked less. With less money coming into the home budget, consumption went down. Childcare and education are not carbon-, but labor-intensive. Population is not a key factor in relation to pollution. He continued, "Take China for example. Did their carbon footprint go down due to their draconian one-child policy? Not at all." It is actually families with fewer children who can afford spending their resources on carbon-guzzling consumer goods, cars and air-travel. Political and economic policy rather than babies cause large-scale pollution.

Education is key in many countries in the Far East, including Korea and Japan. Their educational system is extremely competitive, as is the workplace. "The price of failure is extraordinarily high," Stone said. Schools in the industrialized East tend to publish student names with test scores to foster competition to detect the winner among the many losers. The individualized Western education is doing the reverse, de-emphasizing competition in order to build cooperation and teamwork. Mongolia bucked the educational

trend of fierce competition with its Far Eastern neighbors. That nation has also avoided their devastatingly low birthrates.

Any attitude that "de-prioritizes the importance of kinship and family" causes fertility to fall. Stone listed leisure, work/career, self-actualization and even religion. Religion, however, can be both a positive and negative influence on family formation and nativity. The Abrahamic religions generally promote family formation, yet extreme dedication, such as that of celibate monks and nuns, does not create more children. Israel and Georgia are examples of nations where religion has made a positive impact on the birthrate.



The wildly popular K-Pop bands model life as single individuals. Demographer Lyman Stone concluded, "Social icons matter." He suggested, "If you want fertility in Korea to rise, make social icons that promote having families."

Panelist **Koonam Park** was born and educated in ROK. The Yale University researcher postponed her career until her third child started kindergarten. "Many young people in Korea understand the financial and social difficulties in having a family and children, but they do not know yet what a happy experience it is to have a husband and children." The mother of four continued, "My job cannot bring me that kind of happiness."

Discussion and closing remarks were given by **Dr. Michael Jenkins**, president, Universal Peace Federation International and chairman, The Washington Times Foundation.

